



Montgomery County Council

For Immediate Release

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COUNTY COUNCIL APPROVES FORUM ON NATIONAL PARK SEMINARY AT FOREST GLEN

The County Council today authorized a forum to look at possible reuses of the National Park Seminary.

Although the Army still owns the property, holding a forum is a way for the county to signal to developers and others what it envisions for the property. At the same time, developers can tell the county what is economically feasible and community members can contribute to the planning process.

"We believe the Seminary is a pressing land use issue for the county and also a valuable historic resource," said Councilmember Derick Berlage. "A forum will give Park and Planning a chance to discuss with potential developers a range of probable uses including those that will give the public access to the property."

The Montgomery County Planning Board will convene a nationally-advertised forum for potential developers and other interested parties to look at possible reuse of the Seminary property. The forum will focus on finding uses that fit within the county's land use plans, the surrounding community and is cost effective.

The Seminary started in the late 1890s its existence as a "finishing school" for women. The U.S. Army took over the property in 1942 to be used as a convalescent hospital during World War II. Since then the property has served as the Walter Reed Army Medical Center Annex providing research facilities, living quarters and other uses for Army personnel.

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Earlier this year the Army reported to the General Services Administration that it no longer needs the property. GSA is currently going through its disposition process which includes offering the property for sale to the county at fair market value. If the county or another governmental agency does not purchase the property, GSA would offer it for sale to private parties.

The county has acknowledged that acquiring the property may not be feasible because of the high costs involved. However, the county wants to ensure that any future reuse preserves the historic buildings on the property and are compatible with the area master plan.

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